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DEPT FOR INL/FO/DAS MCCAMPBELL

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TAGS: ES KCRM PGOV PREL
SUBJECT: DAS MCCAMPBELL VISIT TO EL SALVADOR, FEBRUARY 5-7,
2008

Classified By: Ambassador Charles L. Glazer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counternarcotics Christy McCampbell's visit to El Salvador for the February 7 ILEA construction site dedication ceremony offered public reinforcement of U.S. commitment to democratic policing in the Americas, while at the same time providing an excellent vehicle for engaging high-level Salvadoran interlocutors on key bilateral law enforcement issues. End summary.

¶2. (U) DAS McCampbell arrived in San Salvador on February 5 as the senior member of a U.S. delegation that also included Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) Director Connie Patrick, FLETC Associate Director John Dooher, and high-level representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF).

¶3. (U) Shortly after arriving, DAS McCampbell and company attended a dinner in honor of the Salvadoran students at ILEA. This event provided an informal setting for the DAS to meet newly-appointed National Civilian Police (PNC) Director Francisco Rovira, as well as PNC Deputy Director Luis Tobar Prieto and Vice Minister of Public Security and Justice Astor Escalante.

¶4. (C) The following morning, DAS McCampbell, FLETC Director Patrick, and Associate Director Dooher, accompanied by ILEA San Salvador Director and Embassy INL officer, met with Minister of Public Security and Justice Rene Figueroa at his office in the ministry. Minister Figueroa explained the important role that ILEA plays in terms of training Salvadoran and regional police forces. Figueroa extolled ILEA as the cornerstone of ongoing regional efforts to promote democracy through professionalization of police forces and judiciaries. In an aside, he also mentioned the necessity to confront "leftist" critics (presumably the FMLN and U.S.-based NGO's) of ILEA who consistently attempt to portray the institution as "the new School of the Americas." As the wide-ranging conversation progressed, Figueroa also discussed the challenges El Salvador faces in training and equipping the PNC, as well as ongoing efforts to reincorporate recently-deported Salvadorans back into society. DAS McCampbell took the opportunity to thank Minister Figueroa for El Salvador's strong showing at the recent Merida Initiative validation meetings, and expressed her hope that successful funding of the Merida Initiative could eventually help to address some of the PNC's equipment shortfalls. Minister Figueroa closed the meeting by declaring his commitment to the core mission of ILEA, as well as his enthusiasm for cooperation on bilateral and regional law enforcement issues.

¶ 15. (C) Following a courtesy call with the Ambassador and DCM, the delegation traveled to the headquarters of the joint PNC-FBI Transnational Anti-Gang Unit (TAG). After welcoming remarks by PNC Director Rovira and Deputy Tobar Prieto, the operational commander of the TAG briefed DAS McCampbell and others on the philosophy, operational focus, and latest achievements of the unit. A senior PNC investigator offered an overview of the threat posed by transnational street gangs such as MS-13 and M-18, and summarized PNC efforts to dismantle the organizations. One of the FBI agents assigned to the TAG then explained how the organization fits into the USG anti-gang strategy, and offered concrete examples of how the newly-established unit has advanced bilateral efforts to counteract transnational crime. Both briefers specifically mentioned the important roles which INL-supplied computers and software (analyst notebook) will play in enhancing operational capabilities, particularly when combined with the pending delivery of an INL-funded automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS). The Salvadorans took great pains to express their gratitude for U.S. assistance to the TAG, and left no doubt that they would put any further USG-funded assistance to good use.

¶ 16. (U) The dedication ceremony went off without a hitch on the morning of February 7. Ambassador Glazer, FLETC Director Patrick, and DAS McCampbell spoke for the U.S., while Minister of Public Security and Justice Rene Figueroa delivered the keynote address for the Salvadoran side. Figueroa's remarks were notable for the effusive praise he offered to ILEA, as well as his articulate explanation of how law enforcement training buttresses democratic governance and human rights. A formal press conference, in which both U.S. and Salvadoran interlocutors participated, rounded out the agenda. Subsequent press coverage of the event highlighted the fact that ILEA is a cooperative undertaking, and that the soon-to-be constructed facility will provide law enforcement

training to democratic police forces from throughout the hemisphere.

¶ 17. (U) Comment: DAS McCampbell's participation demonstrated USG commitment to democratic policing in the Americas. In addition to the publicity garnered by the ceremony, her visit provided an important opportunity to engage high-level Salvadoran law enforcement officials, and to reinforce the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation in the fight against transnational crime. End comment.

GLAZER